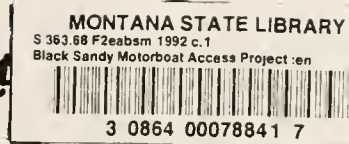


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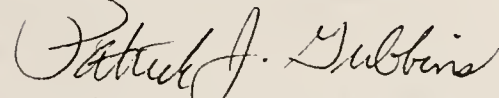
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Parks Division, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
1420 E. 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620
Fisheries Division, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
1420 E. 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620
Wildlife Division, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
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State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society Montana
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Regional Information Officer, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
1420 E. 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620
Board of County Commissioners, Lewis & Clark County Courthouse, Helena,
MT 59623
Kathy Macefield, Lewis & Clark County Planning Office, Lewis & Clark
County Courthouse, Helena, MT 59623
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184,
Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hirst, Hirst & Associates, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for Hauser Lake State Park, Black Sandy Site, in Lewis & Clark County, and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until August 15, 1992. All comments should be sent to the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Gubbins, Region 8
Dept Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
(406) 444-4720

Enclosures

PLEASE RETURN

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BLACK SANDY MOTORBOAT ACCESS PROJECT

**Proposed Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration
Project Number F-69-D(MA)**

Prepared by:

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Parks Division and Region 8
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

July 29, 1992

Prepared to Meet Requirements of Both the
Montana and the National Environmental Policy Acts
(MEPA and NEPA)

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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, Montana 59620

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Part I. Project Description and Background Information

1. Project or Application: Black Sandy Motorboat Access Project
2. Description of Project: This project will improve motorboat access facilities at Black Sandy, along with camping and day use facilities for those motorboat anglers who utilize the site. It will involve reconstruction of existing facilities, construction of new facilities, removal and replacement of several existing facilities, and site reclamation and protection work. The project will improve sanitary conditions, address public health and safety issues, protect riparian vegetation, improve the aesthetics of the motorboat angling experience offered, and provide facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities. Appendix A, Preliminary Site Plan, shows proposed improvements. Appendices B, Existing Site Development, and C, Site Photos, depict current facilities and their condition.

Black Sandy is one of several public and private access sites at Hauser Reservoir. The recreational demands on the entire reservoir greatly exceed available facilities. Improvements at Black Sandy are needed both to provide needed facilities at Hauser and to provide needed improvements at the Black Sandy site.

Extreme over-crowding at Black Sandy has been a serious problem in recent years. The number of campsites will be reduced from 50 or more--the number varies a great deal because sites currently are not demarcated--to 33 (29 for recreational vehicles and 4 or more for tents).

Insufficient day use facilities have also been a problem. The project will provide for increased and improved quality day use motorboat fishing opportunities. Site accommodation of day use groups will increase from the current use--as measured by boat trailers parked--of around 16 to 33.

Current use at this site is estimated at 25,000 angler days and 8000 motorboat launchings/dockings per year. After project completion, use is expected to remain at these levels. Maintenance of angler use in the face of reduced camping opportunities will be accomplished by exchanging angler/camper use for day use angling.

Proposed work generally includes: new boat docks and slips, additional planks and new lighting at the existing boat ramp, fill into the lake plus retaining wall, new flush comfort station and latrine, improvement of roads and parking areas, new handicapped access facilities, and site reclamation and protection. A more detailed description of proposed work is included under Section III of the EA narrative, Subsection 3.a. Proposed Action.

3. Alternatives, Including Mitigation, that Have Been Proposed or Considered: The following alternatives have been considered and are discussed in detail in Section III of the EA: proposed alternative, partial development, additional development, no action, no decrease in camping, eliminate camping, and acquire and develop another site.

Mitigation is discussed in Section III of the EA Narrative, Subsections 4 and 5, 6, Explanation of Impacts to the Physical and Human Environment.

4. Type of Proposed State Action: State Parks development project

5. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action (MCA and ARM Citations):

Sections 23-1-101 and 23-1-102, MCA, provide general authority to the Department to manage the state parks system.

Pursuant to Section 23-1-110, MCA, and HB 495 from the 1991 legislative session, the Department is in the process of developing for adoption administrative rules to more specifically address parks development projects.

HB 5, the 1991 legislature's bill to appropriate money for capital projects through the Long Range Building Program, provides the spending authority for this and other projects.

6. Name, Address and Phone of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency): Not applicable

7. Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 1993
Estimated Completion Date: Winter 1993/Spring 1994
Current Status of Project Design (% Complete): The draft master plan for the site has been prepared; additional public comment is being sought. Design and engineering have not yet begun.

8. Location Affected by Proposed Action (County, Range and Township): Lewis and Clark County, Section 5, T11N, R2W and Section 32, T12N, R2W. The project is located 18 miles northeast of Helena, on the northwest shoreline of Hauser Lake. See vicinity map included as Appendix D.

9. Map/Site Plan: Attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. a different map scale may be submitted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See: Appendices A-C referenced above. Appendix E, "Birds Eye View" of Site, depicts the topography of the site.

10. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	<u>Acres</u>	
a. Developed: Residential	<u>0</u>	
Industrial	<u>0</u>	
b. Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation:	<u>44</u>	*
c. Wetland Areas:	<u>0</u>	
Riparian Areas:	<u>1/2</u>	
d. Floodplain:	<u>0</u>	
e. Productive: Irrigated Cropland	<u>0</u>	
Dry Cropland	<u>0</u>	
Forestry	<u>0</u>	
Rangeland	<u>0</u>	
Other	<u>0</u>	

* Note: This entire property consists of 44 acres. However, due to steep slopes. Approximately 4 of the 10 acres that are suitable for improvement will be disturbed. As noted above, Appendix E, "Birds Eye View of Site," illustrates the topography of the Black Sandy Site.

11. Agencies From Which Permits or Other Approvals Have Been/Will Be Sought:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed</u>
Corps of Engineers	Section 404 for work below high water	winter 92
County Sanitarian	drainfield permit	winter 92
DOC--Building Codes	building/electrical permits	winter 92
Montana Power Co.	fill in MPC reservoir	winter 92

12. Agencies or Programs From Which Financial Assistance Will Be Sought:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
USFWS--Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration	\$262,500

13. Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA; Note Any That Have Overlapping Jurisdiction:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Consultation</u>	<u>Date</u>
* SHPO	Section 106 concurrence on cultural and historic resources	July 1991
DNRC	floodplain review	March 1992
USDA--SCS	prime and unique farmlands review	July 1991
USFWS	threatened and endangered species	March 1992

* Note: A letter of clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office is included as Appendix F.

14. Other Groups Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

<u>Name of Group</u>	<u>Consultation</u>	<u>Date</u>
Montana Power Company	adjoining owner and reservoir operator	ongoing
Mr. Winford Peak, J & W Industries	adjoining owner and private campground operator	ongoing

15. Summary of Public Involvement: During 1989, a statewide angling pressure survey was conducted. This included Hauser Reservoir, and indicated that Hauser is the third most heavily fished reservoir in Montana. A user preference survey was conducted by mail during spring/summer 1990. People expressed a desire for less crowded conditions and improved facilities.

In 1991, the Department conducted a Hauser Reservoir survey which revealed that 86 percent of all individuals contacted came to Hauser for fishing. Kokanee salmon are most effectively fished by trolling; therefore, boat angling is the predominant use at Hauser and Black Sandy.

Public notice of the proposed project and public meeting was published on March 25 and 29, and April 1 and 5, 1992. Written comments were invited through April 8, 1992. None were received. A public meeting was held on April 10, 1992, from 4-7 pm at the DFWP headquarters building. About 10 people attended, including site users and Montana Power Company. People were generally supportive of the proposal.

Additional public comment will be sought by means of a questionnaire distributed on site in late July and early August to persons using the site. Users will be informed about the tentative proposal and asked for their input about improvements. Since many users, especially the overnight users, are from out-of-town, this should be more effective than conducting a meeting that many would be unable to attend.

Finally, notice of this EA will appear twice in the Helena Independent Record. The Department will publish notice of its availability later in July and seek comment for 15 days. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also publish notice of EA's availability, probably in early September, and seek comment for 15 days.

16. Name(s) of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA/Division or Bureau:

Patrick Gubbins, Region 8	406	444-4720
Doug Monger, Parks Division		444-3750
Dick Mayer, Design and Construction		444-3755
Bobbi Balaz, Federal Aid Coordinator		444-4756

17. Other Individuals or Groups Contributing to this EA:

State and federal agency personnel contacted for information used in this EA include:

Floodplains: Carl Christians, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, floodplain information, March 10, 1992 (phone);

Prime and Unique Farmlands: USDA Soil Conservation Service, prime and unique farmlands information, July 26, 1991 (form);

Historic and Cultural Resources: Dave Schwab, State Historic Preservation Office, July 12, 1991 (letter--Appendix F);

Threatened and Endangered Species: Dale Harms, USFWS Enhancement Office, March 27, 1992 (letter); Dennis Flath, DFWP, March 1992 (phone)

Wetlands: Jeff Herbert, DFWP, March 1992 (personal contact)

Fisheries: Mark Lere, DFWP, various occasions (personal contact); Bruce Rehwinkel, DFWP, July 1992 (personal contact)

18. Date: July 29, 1992

Part II. Environmental Impact Evaluation/Checklist

See checklist attached as Appendix G.

Part III. Environmental Assessment Narrative

1. Purpose and Need for Project/Action

The total estimated fishing pressure in Montana is 2.4 million angler days per year. Most of the public fishing access is provided by the Department at its 300 sites in the Fishing Access Site program distributed across the state in all major drainages, and its 17 water-based units within the Montana State Parks system.

The purpose of this project is to improve the quality of the motorboat fishing experience at the Black Sandy State Park site on Hauser Reservoir. This will be accomplished by improving boating access facilities, protecting riparian vegetation, improving sanitary conditions, and addressing public health and safety issues.

Current use at this site is estimated at 25,000 angler days and 8000 motorboat launchings/dockings per year. After project completion, use is expected to remain at these levels. Maintenance of angler use in the face of reduced camping opportunities will be accomplished by exchanging angler/camper use for day use angling.

In 1989, Hauser Reservoir ranked as the third most heavily fished lake or reservoir in Montana. It is considered to be one of Montana's best and most consistent lake fisheries. It is primarily a premier salmonid fishery and secondarily a varied recreational resource. From 1986 through 1991, fisheries surveys have shown a tremendous expansion of the kokanee salmon population in the reservoir. Creel surveys indicate a four-fold increase in the kokanee population; gill netting indicates a 15-fold increase. The reservoir offers diverse angling opportunity with other species of salmonids including brown trout, rainbow trout and mountain whitefish, along with yellow perch, largemouth bass and walleye.

Hauser Dam is the second in a series of three dams on the upper Missouri River. The dam impounds water nearly to the base of Canyon Ferry Dam, forming Hauser Reservoir. It is 15.5 miles in length and relatively narrow, ranging from 0.1 to 1.1 miles in width.

Angler use at the 3800 acre Hauser Reservoir increased from 37,500 days per year in 1985 to 74,000 in 1989. In 1991, the average annual combined trout/salmon angler catch rate was 0.48 fish per hour. The average lengths of creeled fish were 15.3" for rainbow

and 14.7" for salmon. The top ranked lake fishery is Canyon Ferry, which is 35,000 acres and has 99,000 angler days per year. The 4800 acre Holter Reservoir received the second highest annual angler use, 75,000 in 1989.

A five year fisheries management plan for Hauser was approved by the Fish and Game Commission in September 1989. The plan describes the physical characteristics of the reservoir and the status of the fishery. It discusses past and present management activities and includes a series of recommended management actions. These management actions will be used by the Department to ensure that the reservoir continues to provide good recreational fisheries and satisfy public demand.

Fishing access issues are discussed in the management plan. Although detailed recommendations are not included, the plan indicates a need for improved facilities and access. More boat ramps, boat trailer parking and recreational vehicle areas were cited, along with improved enforcement at campgrounds and improved access to shore fishing.

In 1991, the Department conducted a user survey on the reservoir. Survey results show that 86 percent of the persons contacted came to Hauser to fish. (Black Sandy Facilities Design User Preference Survey, 1991.) Kokanee salmon are most effectively fished by the use of trolling. Therefore, boat angling is the predominant use on Hauser.

A small number of public and private facilities are located on Hauser; see map included as Appendix H. The narrow canyon setting and abundance of sheer rock walls limits appropriate sites for shoreline facility development. However, several other sites such as White Sandy and Devil's Elbow, whose locations are shown in Appendix H, are suitable for development.

Boat Launch Facilities

Four sites offer launch facilities; three are public and one is private. All receive very heavy launch use during the summer.

- Black Sandy is a Department-owned site located on the northwest shoreline. It has a double lane boat ramp.
- York Bridge, located 6 reservoir miles southeast of Black Sandy, is also Department-owned. It is much smaller, has a single lane ramp, and accommodates considerably fewer visitors.
- Lakeside, located 10 reservoir miles southeast of Black Sandy, is a private marina.
- Riverside is located 15 reservoir miles southeast of Black Sandy. It is Bureau of Reclamation owned, but Department developed and operated. It has a two-lane ramp.

Shore Fishing

The Causeway site, located 4 reservoir miles southwest of Black Sandy, is Department owned. It offers shore fishing but does not have a boat ramp. All boat launch facilities offer some shore fishing opportunities as well.

Camping Facilities

There are four developed campgrounds on Hauser. This includes three Department sites:

- Black Sandy: currently accommodates over 50 overnight user groups;
- York Bridge: accommodates up to 13; and
- Riverside: accommodates up to 50.

The fourth campground on Hauser is at Lakeside. It has 39 sites for overnight users.

The only other camping area serving Hauser is a privately owned area 1/4 mile west of Black Sandy. It has around 24 campsites but does not provide any reservoir access.

Black Sandy was acquired from the Bureau of Land Management (34.1 acres from a land patent in 1991) and through a donation from the Montana Power Company (9.4 acres in 1987). The initial site development work was done in the late 1970's by the Department. Since then, no appreciable improvement or renovation has been done. The site is operated as a State Park. The Montana State Park system has suffered from inadequate funding for many years. This site would have needed extensive improvements regardless of whether the dramatic expansion of the salmon fishery and resultant recreationist demand had occurred.

As noted previously, inadequate angler day use facilities and extreme over-crowding at the Black Sandy campground have been serious problems in recent years. For example: sanitary facilities are inadequate, sites are not demarcated, riparian vegetation is damaged, insufficient boat trailer and vehicle parking is available, overcrowding and close proximity of campers and recreational vehicles are hazards due to propane and other fuels, boat launching facilities need improvements such as more planks at the ramp and new lighting so as to improve safety and convenience, and facilities are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, there is a significant noxious weed infestation at the site. The steep topography of the undeveloped portions of the site severely limits the space within which to make needed improvements. Appendix C includes copies of several photos that depict the site and the conditions described above.

In summary, the key factors demonstrating a need to improve the Black Sandy site include: the importance of Hauser Reservoir as a

fishery, Black Sandy's importance as a motorboat access to that fishery, the site's unsafe and deteriorated condition, and constraints on improving existing access sites or acquiring and developing new ones.

2. Description of the Environment

A description of Hauser Reservoir was included in the preceding section. The condition of the Black Sandy site--its overcrowded conditions and deteriorated shoreline, etc.--were also described earlier.

Black Sandy is 44.5 acres in size. It is long and narrow, and rises steeply to the west from the shoreline along its eastern boundary. Maps and sketches referred to earlier in several appendices to this EA show Black Sandy's location and the site itself, including the county road that passes through the western edge.

The following environmental features are among those that will not be impacted by the project and will not be further discussed:

Floodplains: The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation confirmed that the project area is not in a designated 100 year floodplain. The project will not affect or be affected by a floodplain.

Wetlands: The proposed work will not occur in or result in modification of any wetland environment; there are no wetlands on this site.

Farmlands: The Soil Conservation Service, Helena office, confirmed that no prime or unique farmlands are within the project area.

Historic and Cultural Resources: A letter of clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office is included as Appendix D. No historic or cultural resources will be affected by the project.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enhancement office in Helena and the Department's nongame coordinator were consulted as to potential impacts of this project on threatened or endangered species. Activities covered by the project will have no effect on any federally listed species or their designated critical habitats. Species considered include: black-footed ferret, gray wolf, grizzly bear, eskimo curlew, interior least tern, piping plover, whooping crane, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and pallid sturgeon.

Bald eagles utilize areas near this site (approximately 2 1/2 air miles north and 5 air miles southeast) for feeding, nesting and perching. In addition, a significant concentration of fall

migrants occur in the area in response to the spawning run of kokanee salmon.

Peregrine falcons are being re-introduced near this area (approximately 2 1/2 air miles north) and continue to use habitats in the vicinity during post-fledgling. Occasional migrants may also occur on a very transient basis. This project would have no bearing on habitat use by either migrant or resident peregrines.

Management steps will be taken to protect eagles and falcons from any negative impacts in the project area. Any blasting will be muffled, and water quality will be monitored to protect the food base.

3. Proposed Action and Alternatives

This section discusses the proposed action and identifies various alternative actions that have been considered.

a. Proposed Action

The proposed project was generally described in Section I of the EA and depicted in the preliminary site plan included as Appendix A. It should be noted that a final site plan will not be prepared until a consulting engineer is hired and completes the design and engineering work. The project is subject to modifications based on the final plan.

A detailed list of proposed improvements follows. First, however, the types of facilities as they currently exist are listed below.

Current Site Improvements

Existing facilities include:

- gravel roads and parking areas;
- 2-lane boat ramp;
- small, old courtesy dock;
- boat mooring along the lakeshore at 20 or more campsites; no developed facilities are available except for several boats at the courtesy dock during launching;
- parking for over 60 boat trailers--spaces are not demarcated;
- camping space for over 50 units--spaces are not demarcated;
- three old latrines that are not accessible to persons with disabilities;
- dump station for sewage from recreational vehicles;
- drainfield and force main for sewage system;
- water well with crude irrigation system;
- caretaker pad; and
- various signs, garbage cans, etc.

In addition, a county road travels north-south through the site. No handicapped accessible facilities are available (restrooms, parking, pathways, etc.) Many of the numbers shown above are approximate, since spaces are currently not demarcated.

Proposed Improvements

Proposed work includes:

- removing the old boat dock and replacing it with two new boat docks with slips;
- installing additional planks and new lighting at the existing boat ramp;
- increasing the boat mooring capability from around 20 to 25 (7 along the retaining wall, 12 at the dock, and 6 at courtesy dock for temporary mooring during launching);
- decreasing the number of campsites from over 50 to 33 (29 for RV units and 4 or more for tents);
- increasing day use opportunities and facilities through parking and other facilities described above to accommodate 33 boats rather than 16;
- removing 2 old latrines and installing a new flush comfort station and 1 new latrine;
- improving roads and circulation patterns;
- improving parking areas to provide 63 boat trailer spaces and 27 passenger vehicle spaces;
- constructing new handicapped access facilities (parking, pathways, restrooms, and one camping space);
- installing a new retaining wall (15'x 350'x 2')--that also provides handicapped accessible walkway plus boat mooring--along a portion of the lakeshore;
- extending usable space of the site by placing fill a width of 15' (390 cubic yards) into the lake along the distance of the retaining wall;
- reclaiming and protecting the site through landscaping, barriers, and other measures;
- replacing and installing signs, fee booth, gate and similar minor features; and
- relocating the caretaker's site.

Please note that numbers are approximate and subject to change pending final design and engineering.

b. Partial Development Alternative

Variations that would decrease the type or amount of work done at the site could be considered. For example, latrines could be installed instead of flush comfort facilities. This would save some money in the short term, but eventually the improvements would be needed to address the problems described under the no action alternative, discussed later in this section. The proposed improvements are not lavish; they represent a balance between the competing needs for site protection, health and safety, a quality

fishing experience, maintaining overnight and day use for anglers, and reasonable operation and maintenance costs.

c. Additional Development Alternative

Variations that would increase the type or amount of work done could also be considered. For example, roads could be paved, more docks could be installed, the ramp could be widened, etc. This would cost much more money and encourage an increase in use beyond what is reasonable given the size of the site.

d. No Action Alternative

If no work improvements are made at the site, overcrowded conditions will continue, public health and safety issues will remain unaddressed, the shoreline will continue to deteriorate and remain unprotected, no handicapped access facilities will be available, day users will not be reasonably accommodated, boat launch facilities and access roads will be substandard, and the quality of the fishing experience will continue to be less than desirable.

e. No Decrease in Camping Alternative

If 50 or more individual campsites were designated and developed, day use would be curtailed even below its current levels. The steep topography of the site, along with its narrow configuration, severely limits the type and amount of site improvements that can be done. There is not enough space to designate 50 or more individual campsites and retain much day use opportunity.

f. Elimination of Camping Alternative

Camping could be eliminated altogether and the site converted entirely to day use. This would decrease the cost of the project and eliminate the need to install flush toilets and other site improvements. This is not considered to be a reasonable alternative. It is a drastic step that is unnecessary to adequately protect the site and the resource. The site has historically been a popular camping place for both local and non-local anglers. Closing the site to camping, especially when there are no other reasonable locations to accommodate that use, is unreasonable. User surveys have indicated that people use the site because they can boat, fish and camp at the same site.

g. Acquire and Develop Another Site Alternative

Another possibility is for the Department or the private sector to acquire and develop one or more other sites. Developing another site in addition to Black Sandy is viable. However, for reasons explained under the no action alternative discussed above, developing other sites could not substitute for making needed improvements at Black Sandy.

Developing another site is restricted for several reasons. First, the cost to develop a new site would be substantial.

Second, it would take several years before a site could be acquired and developed. Demand for facilities on Hauser so greatly exceeds current supply that a lengthy delay (two years or more) is undesirable. Third, there is a limited amount of land for other sites that is suitable in regard to slope and access to roads.

The best potential for acquisition and development of additional motorboat access sites for day use and/or overnight use exists at two locations: the privately-owned White Sandy site just south of Black Sandy, and the privately- and county-owned Devil's Elbow site 7 miles to the south. As a result of a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process of the Montana Power Company dams along the Missouri, including Hauser Dam, that is currently in progress, there is potential for future development of these sites with mitigation funds. Discussions about the possibility of developing White Sandy as a overnight use area are underway. The proposed design of Black Sandy has taken into account that its future use could change from a mix of overnight and day use to day use only. The proposed design is such that such a conversion could readily be made. As proposed, such a conversion could occur in the future.

4. Explanation of Impacts to the Physical Environment

This section addresses potential minor or moderate impacts, adverse or beneficial, to the physical environment. The section discusses those issues that were identified as potential impacts in the checklist. Areas that were judged to not be affected by the proposed project are not discussed here.

Identification of impacts included consideration of the Black Sandy site itself, the reservoir environment, and other nearby properties such as the public and private properties nearby (e.g. private campground just west of the site, private property south of the site, and Montana Power property dam 1/2 mile to the north, county road).

Any anticipated adverse impacts can be characterized in almost all cases as likely to occur during construction only. Several impacts resulting from a shift from overnight use to more day use will continue to occur both on- and off-site after completion of the project. Mitigation stipulations or other enforceable controls are addressed in sections as applicable.

Air Quality: Air quality will deteriorate slightly during construction due to dust from the construction site and from heavy equipment travelling to the site. Standard measures such as watering will be taken.

The anticipated shift from overnight to increased day use will result in more vehicle trips per day, thereby impacting the

graveled county road that provides access to the site, and adjacent lands such as the private campground that the road passes through. An increase in dust is likely to occur as a result of more vehicle trips per day.

Water Quality: Turbidity in reservoir waters adjacent to the site will increase slightly during construction as a result of disturbance at or below water level for boat ramp work and for installation of docks and a retaining wall. A sediment control plan will be developed prior to construction and will be implemented during construction to minimize potential increases in suspended sediment in reservoir waters. A sediment fence will be used during all phases of construction occurring at or below the water level to contain and minimize turbidity.

Installation of the proposed retaining wall will require placing approximately 390 cubic yards of fill along the shoreline of the reservoir. The Army Corps of Engineers will evaluate this proposal in detail prior to issuing a 404 permit.

Upon completion of the project, the quantity of runoff and associated sediment entering the reservoir will be reduced at this site as a result of improved vegetative cover, improved roads and parking areas, and placement of shoreline protection to decrease erosion from wave action. In addition, surface and ground water quality will be better protected with the installation of a new comfort station and drainfield.

Vegetation: The riparian and other vegetative cover at this site will improve as a result of this project. Designation of camping and parking areas, and control of off-road parking and other uses help allow vegetation to recover. Landscaping/site reclamation will be an important part of the project. Improved control of weeds will be another benefit.

5. Explanation of Impacts to the Human Environment

This section addresses potential minor or moderate impacts, adverse or beneficial, to the human environment. The section discusses those issues that were identified as potential impacts in the checklist. Areas that were judged to not be affected by the proposed project are not discussed here.

Identification of impacts included consideration of the Black Sandy site itself, the reservoir environment, and other nearby properties such as the public and private properties nearby (e.g. private campground and store just west of the site, private property south of the site, and Montana Power property dam 1/2 mile to the north, county road).

Any anticipated adverse impacts can be characterized in almost all cases as likely to occur during construction only. Several impacts resulting from a shift from overnight use to more day use will continue to occur both on- and off-site after completion of the project. Mitigation stipulations or other enforceable controls are addressed in sections as applicable.

Noise: Noise will occur throughout construction due to operation of heavy equipment on-site and as it travels to the site. Upon completion of the project, however, noise control at the site will be improved. Designating and decreasing the number of campsites will result in greater separation, and result in fewer complaints about noise from generators and people.

Risk/Hazards: designating campsites and decreasing the number of them will result in a more safe situation. The current condition of closely spaced (oftentimes with 3' or less separation between units) campers and recreational vehicles with propane tanks etc. could be disastrous in case of fire or an explosion, for example.

Improved roads, lighting at the boat ramp to accommodate the large numbers of persons fishing at night, and improved sanitary facilities should all improve the human health and safety aspects of the site.

Community Impacts: On-site impacts--Alteration of the distribution and decrease of the density of the population will be a definite impact. In addition to addressing human health and safety issues noted above, it will also contribute to an improved quality of outdoor recreation experience for most of the participants. The Department recognizes, however, that this is subjective. To date, public comment has been supportive of the proposal. However, the Department anticipates some controversy and objections from some users who do not want to see any change in the current situation, do not view it as unsafe or as a detraction, and prefer accommodating larger numbers of overnight users.

Off-site impacts--The decrease in number of overnight users will cause displacement to other areas. Although Hauser is generally at carrying capacity, the approximately 17 displaced overnight use parties can be accommodated through disbursal to other sites on Hauser, Holter and Canyon Ferry. Some of the individual Department sites on Hauser are at capacity, but others are not. Some of the campers will be displaced to private facilities at the private campground adjoining Black Sandy to the west and to Lakeside. Some additional capacity is available at these private areas.

Another consideration regarding the proposed decrease in number of campsites is that some of the Helena-area campers may stop camping at Black Sandy or may camp there less often. Some users will stop camping there but will continue to fish.

As a result of camping displacement, there should be economic benefit to the adjoining campground, and, to a lesser extent, to Lakeside. Increased day use of Black Sandy is also expected to stimulate some economic benefit to the store at the private campground to the west.

Public Services/Utilities/Energy: The proposed action will affect governmental services from the standpoint that performing operation and maintenance work at the site should be more efficient and cost-effective for the Department as a result of the improvements. The anticipated decline in revenue from camping should be offset by increased revenue from day users. No other appreciable difference to local or state government is anticipated. Increased traffic should not significantly affect county road maintenance.

A slight increase in electrical consumption is anticipated as a result of the project. The flush comfort station and boat ramp lights will account for this increase.

Aesthetics/Recreation: As discussed above under community impacts, the proposal will result in a substantial alteration of the current character and appearance of the site, and the quality of the recreational opportunity. Improving the fishing experience as a result of making the site improvements is one of the purposes of the project. As noted above, not everyone will view this as an improvement.

6. Environmental Assessment Conclusion/Summary Evaluation of Significance of Impacts

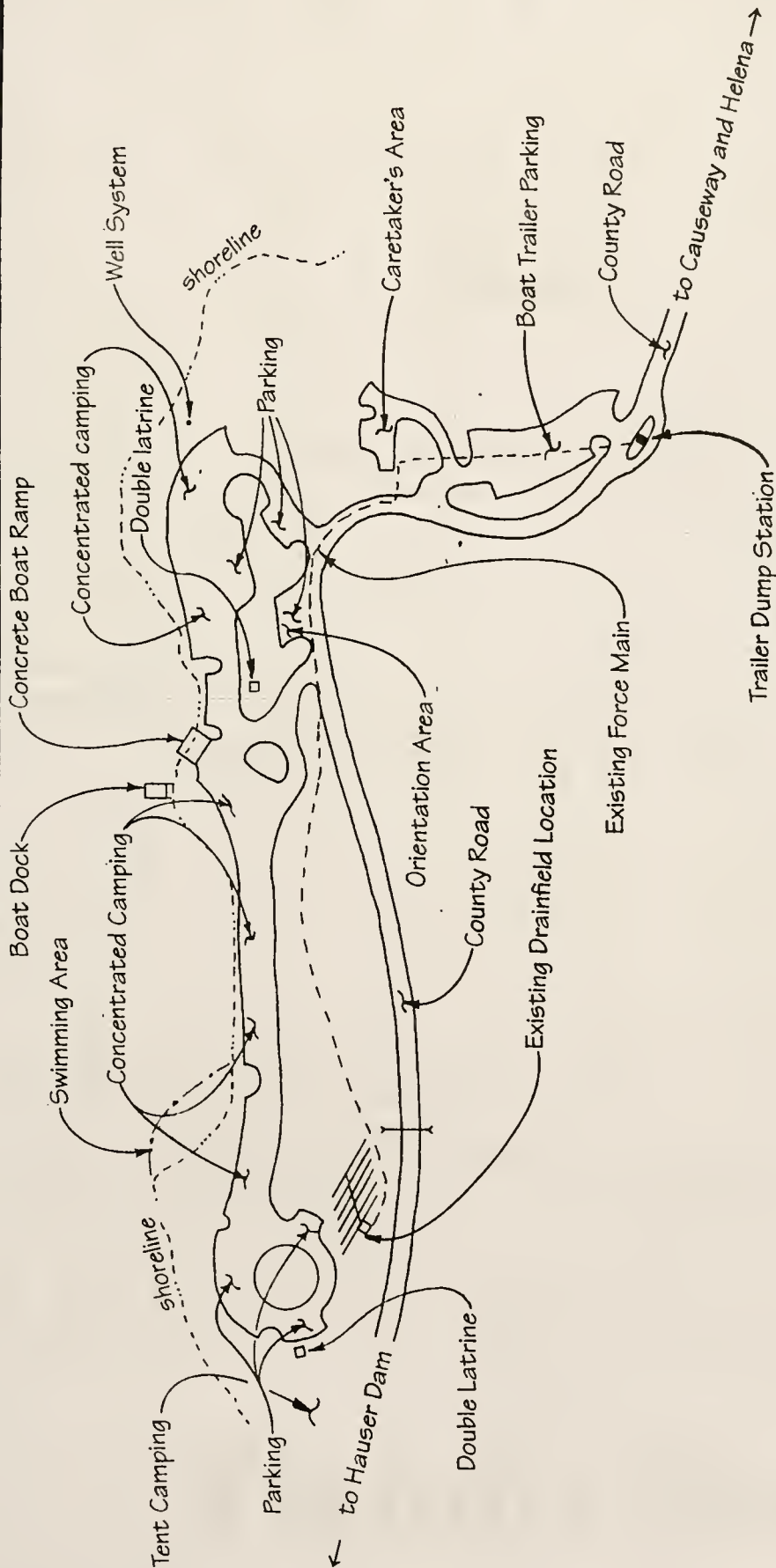
The proposed action, considered as a whole, is expected to have a number of minor or moderate impacts. As discussed above, these are expected to be temporary and mitigable during construction. Or, the long-term impacts are expected to result in an overall improvement over the current condition. The proposed action is not judged to have substantial cumulative or precedent-setting impacts.

The Department concludes that an EIS under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) is not required. The review has demonstrated that the impacts associated with the project are minimal. The net result of the proposed work is a positive effect on the human and physical environment.

Note: For the purpose of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, review of this EA, and determination and issuance of a Finding of No Significant Effect would be the responsibility of the federal agency (USFWS).

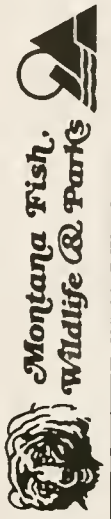
blsandy.ea

APPENDIX B



not to scale

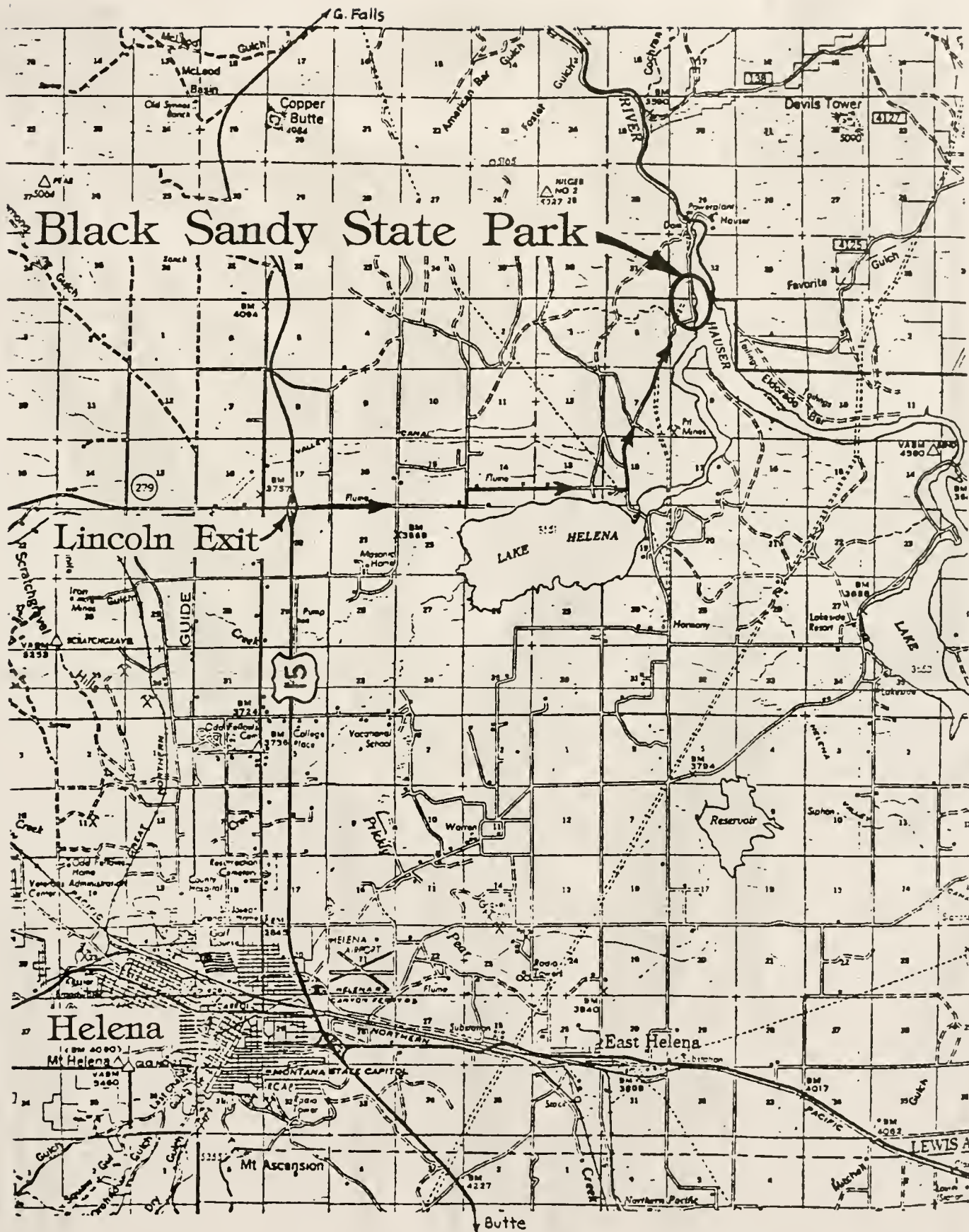
Black Sandy State Park
Existing Site Development
as of July, 1992



APPENDIX C

SITE PHOTOS

(will be available soon)



APPENDIX D

Vicinity Map





APPENDIX E

BIRDS-EYE VIEW

Black Sandy State Recreation Area

Hanser Reservoir Helena, MT.

Done

**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

RECEIVED
JUL 20 1991
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
BUREAU



1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

July 18, 1991

Marcella Sherfy
State Historic Preservation Officer
State Historic Preservation Program
Montana Historical Society
225 North Roberts
Helena, Montana 59620

JUL 22 1991
CONCUR
NO PROPERTIES ON OR ELIGIBLE
FOR NRHP APPEAR LIKELY TO
EXIST WITHIN PROJECT IMPACT AREA
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 7/26/91 SIGNED David Siles

Dear Marcella:

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is proposing a project using state and matching federal funds to do extensive campground redevelopment at our Black Sandy State Park. It is anticipated that the project will include a new comfort station, boat docks, and restructuring of existing camp spaces. This property was surveyed for cultural resources prior to development in 1979 with no cultural resources being located. The site has since been heavily developed. Based on the past cultural survey and past disturbance at this site, we feel that the proposed campground improvements will have a low likelihood of impacting significant cultural resources.

Please review your files and provide us with your comments regarding this proposed project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

PAUL VALLE
Cultural Resources Coordinator
Field Services Division

cd

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION : *Black Sandy.*

Appendix G

	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructures?		X			
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X			
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X			
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X			
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazards?		X			
f. Other: _____					
2. <u>AIR</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Emission of air pollutants during or deterioration of ambient construction air quality? (also see improvement #13(c)) <i>afterward.</i>				X	- See comments.
b. Creation of objectionable odors? <i>Will eliminate odors in old vault latrine.</i>		X			
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X			
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X			
* e. Other: <u>For P-R/D-J projects</u> , will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (also see 2a)		X			

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

	UNKNOWN	NCNE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
3. <u>WATER</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		
<i>During construction, improvement afterward.</i>					
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		
<i>Will improve.</i>					
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?			X		
<i>Will involve fill into reservoir and require other 404 permit.</i>					
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X			
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X			
f. Changes in the quality of ground water?		X			
g. Changes in the quantity of ground water?					
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or ground water?			X		
<i>Will improve.</i>					
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X			
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or ground water quality?		X			
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or ground water quantity?		X			
** 1. Other: For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (also see 3c)		X		-	verified w/ DNRC.
* m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (also see 3a)		X			

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
4. <u>VEGETATION</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		
<i>Will improve due to site reclamation/landscaping/stabilization.</i>					
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X			
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X			
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X			
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		
** f. Other: For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X	-		verified w/ SCS
5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X			
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X			
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X			
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X			
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X			
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X			
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X			
** h. Other: For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (also see 5f)		X	-		See comments in narrative.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

Fish and Wildlife, Continued

* i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (also see 5d)

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS

Will the proposed action result in:

- a. Increases in existing noise levels? *DURING construction, afterward will improve.*
- b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels? *X*
- c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property? *X*
- d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation? *X*
- e. Other: _____

7. LAND USE

Will the proposed action result in:

- a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area? *will improve by creating more productive space for day users and more desirable area for campers. X*
- b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance? *X*
- c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action? *X*
- d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences? *The design will reduce availability of 20 camp units, which will be displaced to other areas. X*
- e. Other: _____

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS

Will the proposed action involve:

- a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption? *will ↓ risks if there is a fire or explosion. X*

UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
	X			
		X		
	X			
	X			
	X			
	X			
	X			
			X	See comments

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X			
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?				X	See comments
* d. Other: For P-R/D-I, will any chemical toxicants be used? (also see 8a)		X			
9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACTS</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?				X	See comments
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?				X	same
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X		
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?				X	
e. Changes in cultural diversity or uniqueness?				X	
f. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?				X	
g. Other: _____					
10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES/</u>					
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public facility maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____				X	See comments
	- FWP	OEM			
	will be	more cost			
	effective				
	- The project will	improve parks			
	& rec. facilities,	roads, septic,			
	etc.				
	- County road will	have more	traffic.		

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

FWP camp receipts will ↓ by ↓ the number of camp stalls. These revenues should be balanced by an ↑ in day users.

- b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?
- c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?
- d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?
- e. Other: _____

UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
---------	------	-------	-------------------------	--

Slightly more electrical use - comfort station / boat ramp lighting

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION

Will the proposed action result in:

- a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?
- b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?
- c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational opportunities and settings?

This should improve. It is one of the project purposes.

X See comments.

* d. Other: For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted?

12. CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES

Will the proposed action result in:

- a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?
- b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?
- c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?

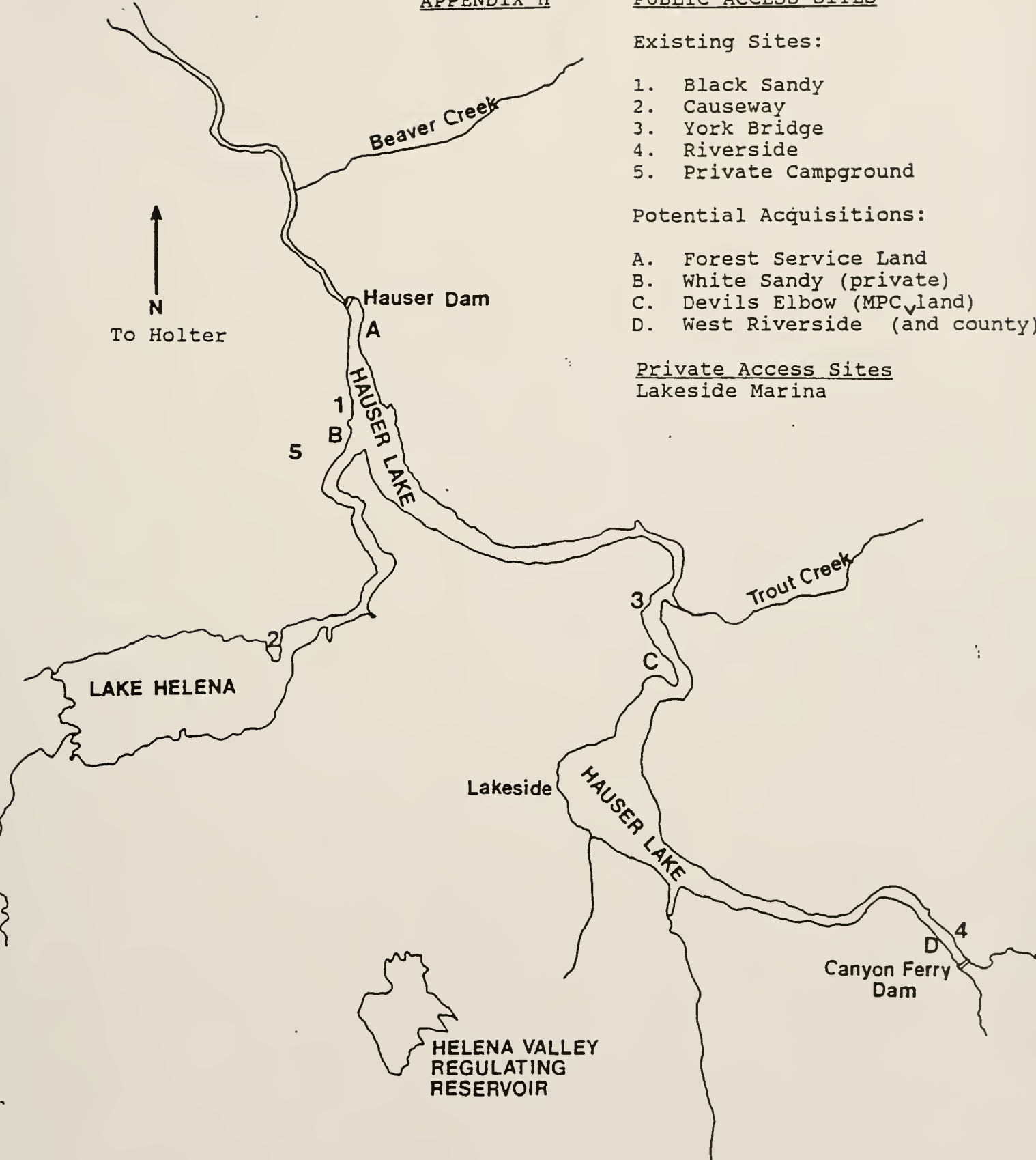
X - Gates of MtAs Wilderness is several miles north, on Hole. Proposed wilderness at Oxbow on HOLE is further north.

*** d. Other: For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (also see 12.a)

X See SHPO letter.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED BY PROJECT CHANGE?
13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE				
Does the proposed action, considered as a whole:				
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)	X			
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?	X			
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?	X			
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?	X			
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?			X	Opposition to ↓ in # overnight campsites may surface.
* f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (also see 13e)			X	
** g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.			X	See list in EA.
<u>For P-R/D-J Projects</u>				
* Determine whether the described impact may result; respond on checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.				
** Include a discussion in the EA narrative.				
*** Include a discussion in the EA narrative and attach documentation.				



Existing Sites:

1. Black Sandy
2. Causeway
3. York Bridge
4. Riverside
5. Private Campground

Potential Acquisitions:

- A. Forest Service Land
- B. White Sandy (private)
- C. Devils Elbow (MPC land)
- D. West Riverside (and county)

Private Access Sites
Lakeside Marina

Scale: 1" = approx. 1.6 miles

Figure 1. Map of Hauser Reservoir showing existing and potential access sites.

